



# Tennessee News Release

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In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

## A CHALLENGING 2011 GROWING SEASON CONCLUDES WITH MIXED RESULTS

**NASHVILLE, January 12, 2012** – A wet spring followed by an extremely dry August greeted Tennessee farmers in 2011. Crop production results varied considerably from farm-to-farm and were generally not as good as expected in the last yield forecast in November. For the second year in a row the burley tobacco crop was the most affected crop by the odd spring and late summer weather. Final overall yields for crops, other than the burley tobacco and corn, were about equal to the five-year averages. Surprisingly, corn yields were moderately above average. State Director Debra Kenerson noted that, “This was the second consecutive year where farmers faced more than their share of crop production challenges. Results could have been much more encouraging if we had just received average rainfall in August. Where we have production increases over previous years farmers devoted considerably more acreage (cotton, corn).” The final yield estimates for 2011 showed the following: **Corn**, 131 bushels per acre, up 14 bushels from 2010’s yield of 117 bushels; **Cotton**, 813 pounds per acre, down 32 pounds from the previous year; **Soybeans**, 32 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel from 2010; **Burley tobacco**, 1,610 pounds per acre, down 50 pounds from a year earlier.

### COTTON PRODUCTION UP BY MORE THAN 20 PERCENT

Tennessee’s cotton production is estimated at 830,000 bales, up 149,000 bales from 2010. The State’s final yield averaged 813 pounds of lint per acre, down 32 pounds from the previous year. Producers’ harvested area was 490,000 acres, up 103,000 acres from 2010. The effects of an extremely dry August were reflected in lower yields. Production is up more than 20 percent almost entirely due to the increased acreage.

### 2011 CORN PRODUCTION HIGHEST IN OVER 9 DECADES

Corn for grain production is estimated at 96.3 million bushels, the highest production since 1917 and third highest on record. The final yield, at 131 bushels per acre, was up 14 bushels from a year earlier. Tennessee corn producers harvested 735,000 acres for grain, an increase of 95,000 acres over 2010. Acres harvested for silage totaled 38,000. In 2011 the silage yield, at 17 tons per acre, was up 1 ton from the previous year. Silage production totaled 646,000 tons. Despite the widespread flooding of thousands of acres and prolonged wet field conditions and re-plants, corn planting was mostly completed by the end of May with the crop emerging on schedule. The state’s major corn producing areas received timely rains during the critical pollination phase; however, extremely dry weather set-in during August with several locations receiving little to no rain all month. As a result, late planted acres were sapped of significant yield potential. September brought rainy weather with cooler temperatures that slowed grain dry down and delayed harvest of late planted acres. Finally, in October there were three weeks of great harvest weather and practically all the corn crop was harvested by month’s end. Corn yields were highly variable across the state but finished strong with an overall above average yield.

### SOYBEAN PRODUCTION SLIPS FROM 2010

Soybean production is estimated at 40 million bushels, down 8 percent from the previous year. The State’s final soybean yield is estimated at 32 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel from 2010. Producers harvested 1.25 million acres for beans, down 160,000 acres from the previous year. In 2011, Tennessee producers experienced frustrating weather including excessive spring rain, flooding, and even some tornados causing soybeans to be planted later than planned. August brought very hot and very dry conditions to Tennessee with some areas reporting no measureable rainfall for the entire month while temperatures soared well above normal. September weather brought cooler temperatures and rainfall, benefitting all soybeans, and saving the later double-cropped beans from a dismal outcome. By the end of November, virtually the entire soybean crop had been harvested. Despite this year’s weather challenges, the 2011 soybeans turned out to be only slightly less than an average yielding crop.

### BURLEY YIELDS SUFFER FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Burley tobacco growers produced 22.5 million pounds, down 9 percent from 2010. The State’s final burley yields averaged 1,610 pounds per acre, down 50 pounds from a year earlier. Three of the past five years have produced poor yields. Growers harvested 14,000 acres, down 1,000 from the previous year. Tennessee’s dark fire-cured tobacco yields are estimated at 2,890 pounds per acre, down 10 pounds from 2010. Dark air-cured yields are estimated at 2,620 pounds per acre, up 20 pounds from a year earlier. Burley tobacco yield prospects were initially promising as an average yielding crop was forecast. Unfortunately, very little general rainfall occurred in most of the major tobacco producing counties during August. Some late-set burley tobacco was not worth cutting. It was a little less than an average year for dark types. Tobacco harvest was nearly complete by mid-October.

(OVER)

WINTER WHEAT GROWERS EXPAND SEEDINGS FOR THE 2012 CROP

Total winter wheat acreage for the 2012 season is forecast at 450,000 acres, up 30,000 acres from 2011. Mild autumn weather with adequate moisture across Tennessee allowed for timely seedings. Winter wheat seeding started in late September and continued at a normal pace through early December. Weather conditions during December, including above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation, have been beneficial for the winter wheat crop. As of the week ending December 4, virtually all of the state’s wheat acreage had been seeded. The crop is rated in good-to-excellent condition.

HAY PRODUCTION DOWN SLIGHTLY

Total hay production, at 3.98 million tons, was down 4 percent from the 2010 crop. Hay acreage, at 1.88 million acres, was down 4 percent from a year earlier. Hay yields held steady averaging 2.1 tons per acre. Alfalfa production totaled 70,000 tons. Alfalfa producers harvested 20,000 acres. Alfalfa yields averaged 3.50 tons per acre, up 0.10 tons from the previous year. Growers seeded 5,000 acres of alfalfa during 2011. Tennessee's hay growing season was marked by a severe flood event in the spring followed by a hot, dry summer. Many parts of the state, especially East Tennessee, had sparse to no rainfall for several weeks starting in mid-to-late July. Fall weather was moderate with ample rainfall and cooler temperatures. Hay stocks on Tennessee farms totaled 3.10 million tons on December 1, 2011, up 4 percent from 2010. Stocks represented 78 percent of this year’s production, compared with 72 percent on December 1, 2010.

CROP ESTIMATES: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, 2011, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Units	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples <sup>1</sup>	lb.	---	---	---	---	7,500	8,500
Corn for grain	bu.	640	735	117	131	74,880	96,285
Corn for silage	ton	45	38	16	17	720	646
Cotton <sup>2</sup>	lb.	387	490	845	813	681	830
Cottonseed	ton	---	---	---	---	235.0	273.0
Hay, All	ton	1,965	1,880	2.11	2.11	4,146	3,976
Other	ton	1,950	1,860	2.10	2.10	4,095	3,906
Alfalfa	ton	15	20	3.40	3.50	51	70
Soybeans	bu.	1,410	1,250	31.0	32.0	43,710	40,000
Tobacco, All	lb.	22.3	22.0	2,051	2,062	45,740	45,363
Dark fire-cured	lb.	6.2	6.9	2,900	2,890	17,980	19,941
Burley	lb.	15.0	14.0	1,660	1,610	24,900	22,540
Dark air-cured	lb.	1.1	1.1	2,600	2,620	2,860	2,882
Winter Wheat	bu.	180	310	53.0	69.0	9,540	21,390
UNITED STATES							
Apples <sup>1</sup>	lb.	---	---	---	---	9,301,600	9,429,900
Corn for grain	bu.	81,446	83,981	152.8	147.2	12,446,865	12,358,412
Corn for silage	ton	5,567	5,928	19.3	18.4	107,314	108,926
Cotton <sup>2</sup>	lb.	10,698.7	9,747.9	812	772	18,104.1	15,673.7
Cottonseed	ton	---	---	---	---	6,098.1	5,267.0
Hay, All	ton	59,872	55,633	2.43	2.36	145,624	131,144
Other	ton	39,906	36,420	1.95	1.81	77,653	65,812
Alfalfa	bu.	19,966	19,213	3.40	3.40	67,971	65,332
Soybeans	lb.	76,610	73,676	43.5	41.5	3,329,181	3,056,032
Tobacco, All	lb.	337.50	324.83	2,128	1,850	718,190	601,029
Dark fire-cured	lb.	15.65	16.40	3,091	3,149	48,379	51,641
Burley	lb.	97.6	88.9	1,922	1,938	187,570	172,265
Dark air-cured	bu.	5.5	5.5	2,760	2,924	15,180	16,082
Winter Wheat	bu.	31,741	32,314	46.8	46.2	1,484,861	1,493,677

<sup>1</sup>Forecast.  
<sup>2</sup> Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.